

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Nicaragua
Program Title:	Strengthening Democracy
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	524-001
Status:	Continuing
Proposed FY 2003 Obligation:	\$4,510,000 DA
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$0
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$0
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY 1998
Estimated Completion Date:	FY 2003

Summary: USAID's democracy program in Nicaragua provides technical assistance and training for civil society organizations to: develop the legal framework for the rule of law; strengthen the institutional framework needed for transparency and accountable governance; and increase civil society participation in government decision making, human rights advocacy and government performance monitoring.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2003 Program:

Consolidate the rule of law (\$500,000 DA). Justice sector reform is one of the Bolaños administration's highest priorities. USAID will provide technical assistance to reform Nicaragua's criminal justice sector, including implementation of the new Criminal Procedures Code, which went into effect in December 2002, and negotiation and passage of a new Penal Code. USAID also will fund training on the new Codes for judges, public defenders, and other judicial system actors. Technical assistance to the Government of Nicaragua will help develop and pass key legislation aimed at increasing the country's accountability and transparency. An additional \$1 million, included in S.O. 598-021 in the FY 2003 CBJ, will be dedicated to this activity. The principal contractor is Florida International University.

Strengthen mechanisms for transparency and accountability (\$2,000,000 DA). USAID will continue to provide technical assistance and training to strengthen the institutional framework needed as a basis to fight corruption. This includes strengthening of the Public Ministry and Attorney General's Office, and reinforces related governance activities, such as expanding and improving Nicaragua's public defender system. USAID will also help the Government of Nicaragua's nascent Office of Public Ethics to develop and implement a strategy for defining and implementing ethical norms for the government, training employees in public ethics, and monitoring government compliance with internal control systems. The principal contractor is Checchi and Company and another contractor to be determined.

Strengthen civil society (\$1,010,000 DA). USAID will promote civil society initiatives to defend human rights, advocate for legal reform, increase citizen participation in government decision making, and increase transparency. USAID will support the private sector in its efforts to monitor government agencies and mobilize citizen support to create awareness about the costs of corruption. An additional \$1.49 million, included in S.O. 598-021 in the FY 2003 CBJ, will be dedicated to this activity. The principal grantees are U.S. registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nicaragua and/or Nicaraguan NGOs.

Conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution/reconciliation (\$1,000,000 DA). USAID will provide technical assistance to civil society and human rights organizations to help victims of domestic violence and other human rights abuses through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and peace commissions. It is anticipated that USAID will enter into a grant agreement with the Organization for American States, a public international organization with a proven track record in conflict and justice, two priority areas for the democracy program.

FY 2004 Program:

In FY 2004, new democracy activities will be developed under SO 524-XXX.

Performance and Results: USAID's technical assistance has been critical not only in passing the Criminal Procedures Code, but also in implementing the Code on schedule despite political and logistical obstacles. Negotiations for passage of the new Penal Code are also on track. With important USAID input, a new Public Ministry has been established and is expanding to meet the needs of the new Criminal Procedures Codes.

USAID expects that activities to promote this objective will result in successful implementation of the new Criminal Procedures Code, with the establishment of oral, accusatorial trials to replace the antiquated, inquisitorial trial system. Prosecutors from both the Public Ministry and the Attorney General's Office will effectively carry out their roles under the new system, as will judges and other key personnel. Implementation of the new Criminal Code, along with the new Penal Code, will provide mechanisms for prosecuting crimes such as narcotrafficking and corruption that were not adequately covered under the previous legislation. Expansion of the new public defenders' system will increase Nicaraguans' access to justice and help introduce due process into the legal system. Passage of new legislation such as the Access to Information Law and the Civil Service Career Law will enhance government accountability and transparency, along with the monitoring mechanisms created by the new Office of Public Ethics.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Nicaragua

524-001 Strengthening Democracy	DA	ESF
Through September 30, 2001		
Obligations	21,320	11,693
Expenditures	16,907	9,323
Unliquidated	4,413	2,370
Fiscal Year 2002		
Obligations	4,022	2,300
Expenditures	4,342	2,870
Through September 30, 2002		
Obligations	25,342	13,993
Expenditures	21,249	12,193
Unliquidated	4,093	1,800
Prior Year Unobligated Funds		
Obligations	0	0
Planned Fiscal Year 2003 NOA		
Obligations	4,510	0
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2003		
Obligations	4,510	0
Proposed Fiscal Year 2004 NOA		
Obligations	0	0
Future Obligations	0	0
Est. Total Cost	29,852	13,993